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Celebrate National Public Health Week April 1-7  
*Public Health is ROI: Save Money. Save Lives.*

**2013 County Health Rankings Detail Health Disparities in the Healthiest State**

SPRINGFIELD – Vermont has been ranked #1 healthiest in *America's Health Rankings* for many years in a row. But Vermonters are not equally healthy, as reported in the latest *County Health Rankings* by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org), the 2013 report ranks Chittenden County as the healthiest in the state, and Essex and Orleans Counties as least healthy. The rankings are based on health outcomes – quality and length of life – and health factors such as smoking, alcohol use, physical activity, access to quality health care, income, education, employment and the built environment.

“The County Health Rankings are an interactive way to educate the public about factors that affect health and well-being,” said Becky Thomas, director for the Springfield district office of the Health Department. “In public health, we monitor these issues and look for ways to improve the health of our communities.”

Teen pregnancy rates have been a concern in this area for several years. We work closely with school staff, health care providers, other state agencies and local human service organizations to try to prevent teen pregnancies, as well as assure teen mothers have access to services that will improve health outcomes for themselves and their children.

“Teen pregnancy prevention is considered a ‘winnable battle’ in public health, and has lasting effects on the health and quality of life for our youth,” Thomas said.

Among the findings in the 2013 *County Health Rankings*:

- 23 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 years in Windsor County give birth, compared to 11 per 1,000 in Chittenden County.
- 11% of adults in Windsor County report poor or fair health, compared to 8% of adults in Chittenden County.
- 17% of adults in Windsor County smoke, compared to 12% in Chittenden County.

- 20% of adults in Windsor County report they are physically inactive, compared to 15% in Chittenden County.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. Nationally, the data revealed that unhealthy counties have more than twice the rate of premature deaths than healthy ones and childhood poverty rates are twice as high in unhealthy counties. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how they compare to other counties within the state based on a range of factors that influence health.

### **Celebrate Health during National Public Health Week**

During National Public Health Week April 1-7, the Vermont Department of Health will highlight the daily work of public health, and will launch *Healthy Vermonters 2020* – the state health assessment that documents the health status of Vermonters at the start of the decade, and sets the goals that will guide the work of public health through 2020.

For health news, information and alerts, visit [www.healthvermont.gov](http://www.healthvermont.gov), follow us on Twitter [twitter.com/healthvermont](https://twitter.com/healthvermont), and join us on Facebook/Springfield District Office at: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/vdhspringfield>

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